

The Fiction Magazine Section

TWINING'S TREASURE

DON'T believe that it is written in blood, protested Leo Decker. "Anyhow, what did an old pirate want to come way inland to bury his treasure? Fancy an inland pirate."

"I don't fancy them," announced Alva. "Twining said the same. I have found as many pirates in the mountains as at the seashore, only they run hotels instead of long, low rakish crafts nowadays."

"That's all you know about it," scoffed Decker. "Pirates are only nautical burglars. When they hit land we call them other names."

"Anyhow, this paper says that Red Burton, in the year 1728, buried some of his store of gold in the cave, and perhaps if we can dig it up we can get the money to pay for our vacations. It would be real nice to get back to town after a vacation and not feel dead broke."

"Stop dreaming," advised Decker. "What chance do you suppose we have, Gifford? This paper has been in the possession of the Hitchman family ever since the old Pine Cone, and was good to the old pirate when he was hurt by the rocks from the roof falling on him as he was watching his treasure."

"What does it matter?" broke in Alva Eakins from the cool embrace of the porch hammock. "We are dying of ennui. We have picked berries and have climbed the Pine Cone, and have fished and boated and everything else there is to do around here. Let's be thankful for the pirate's bequest and turn gold hunters."

"Sure!" assented the masculine trio in concert. "We'll dig up the whole cave if you give the word, Miss Eakins," added Decker. "We'll get picks and shovels, and start out this afternoon."

"Mercy, no," dissented Alva. "That's not the way to look for gold. We must go in the dead of night and carry mattocks. Isn't that what they used to do?"

"Certainly," assented Decker, "but a mattock is merely a broad pointed pick, and they don't make them any more. The demand for mattocks among gold hunters is so light that you have to have them made to order."

"Anyhow we can have lanterns," she said contentedly. "May I see the parchment again, please?"

The three men sprang forward each clutching the document. The usual summer conditions were reversed at Pine Cone. There was but one young woman to three men.

And no vacationers ever ruled by a stately queen. Alva Eakins had been the boast of Amer-

icans in London the season before, and even royalty had deigned to go to her away, yet she had lost none of the unaffectedness that was her great charm, and she was almost a chum to the three, who mutely worshiped her.

Now they looked on in silent adoration as she bent her golden head over the parchment. It was a time-worn document, its very appearance substantiating the claims of its owner that it had been in the family for nearly two centuries.

The folds had been reinforced with linen, itself brown with age, and the faint brown letters supported the statement made in the text that the writing had been done with the pirate's own blood.

It was a clever bit of forgery designed to interest the boarders at the Pine Cone hotel, but it had served its purpose well and the little cave at the foot of the mountain had been dug over scores of times in search for the pirate's gold.

It told how Red Burton, once a pirate captain, had fled inland with a store of gold and jewels borne by black slaves. Pursued by those who had been his associates, but who now were his enemies, he had buried his treasure in the cave, slaying his faithful blacks that their spirits might keep guard over the store of plunder.

As he had concluded his task some of the rocks in the roof of the cavern had become loosened by his pistol shots and had fallen, crushing his legs. Laboriously he had dragged himself to Hitchman's cabin and there his wounds had been rudely dressed.

Blood poisoning had set in and on his deathbed in gratitude to his new-found friends he had bequeathed to them his store of plunder.

An Indian raid had prevented immediate search for the treasure, and when a younger Hitchman had returned to the cabin he could not find the cavern. It was overgrown with weeds and brush, and for nearly 100 years had remained undiscovered.

When at last the clearing of the cave had resulted in the rediscovery of the treasure, the paper was useless. The treasure had been buried by the light of the moon penetrating a cleft in the rocks and this cleft no longer was in existence. The interval had altered the cave with earth, and though every square foot of the cave and a half of the surface of the cave had been gone over scores of times, no success rewarded the efforts of the searchers.

"It presents many difficulties," said Alva as she returned the parchment to Twining. "The thing to do is to get lanterns and look the cave over. We may find where the cleft in the rock was, and then we can clear it out or try to figure where the rays used to fall. Of course, the moon is

not in the same position as she used to be 200 years ago, and we shall have to make allowance for that, but perhaps we can get the approximate location and by thrusting a long rod down into the earth we could sound for the treasure chest."

"Good scheme," approved Twining. "I can get a rod down at the blacksmith's and we'll go over there this afternoon and start our investigations."

"Too hot," objected Gifford. "Anyhow, the place isn't haunted until

Cone cave was perhaps two miles from the hotel, and the way led through a dense pine wood. It was pleasantly cool under the trees, and not until they reached the clearing in front of the cave did they feel the heat which beat down mercilessly upon the hot stones.

The entrance to the cave was gray and forbidding. The brush had been cleared away and one or two trees chopped down to leave a bare space. A rude arch gave entrance to the place and led to a passage little more

than the negro ghosts at their revels. "Treasure caves have to be haunted," declared Alva with a smile. "We must bring plenty of light when we come this evening."

"Tomorrow evening," corrected Twining. "It will take a little time to make the rod and we shall have to soak bricks in kerosene to make the flares. Wood fires will make too much smoke."

"Tomorrow, then," she agreed. "But let us be going. They spent the following afternoon

wants you to go to the cave to-night and look it over. There may be a chance of locating the moon through that cleft."

The good-natured landlady turned away to hide a smile. There was no cleft except in the mind of the man who had forged the parchment, but if it interested the boarders, it was all right. She gave them hot biscuits for supper to make up for the deception.

Out on the porch after tea there was a division of opinion. It had been a hot day on the water and the prospect of a two-mile tramp through the woods and the exploration of a musty cave did not appeal to them without Miss Eakins' presence as an incentive.

"She may not be home for a couple of days," argued Jack Gifford. "It may be cooler to-morrow morning. Let's wait."

"I think it is all a fake anyhow," echoed Decker. "Let's tell her that we went over and couldn't see the moon. If she says that the place is blighting at the other end of the lake. For a quarter he'll take a couple of bricks over to the cave and leave them to make it look as though we had been there."

"That's all right," admitted Twining. "I don't believe myself that there's any treasure in the cave, but we might as well go over. It interests Miss Alva and perhaps we will find something that will make it worth while. There are some fissures in the rocks. It may be that one of them leads to the light."

"It may and it may not," said Gifford. "I don't care either way. Time enough to go when Miss Alva comes back."

Decker echoed the sentiment, but this did not shake Twining's determination, and it ended in his sallying forth alone, swinging a couple of the old-soaked bricks by their wires.

The stillness and the blackness of the night awed him as he made his lonely way along the path. He gave no credence to the stories of ghosts, but the night noises sound strange to city ears, especially when one is alone, and the hoot of the owl and the hoarse croak of the tree toads and of the frogs in a nearby marsh might readily be mistaken for the cries of the dusky guardians of the treasure.

He had reached the entrance and had paused to touch a match to one of the bricks when a groan sounded through the tunnel leading to the cave. The match fluttered to the ground without having fulfilled its office and for a moment Twining turned pale.

He held his ground and the groan sounded again. It seemed more human than supernatural and Twining struck another match. This time he held it steadily to the brick and presently there was a flare of yellow

light as the kerosene was ignited. Bravely he started down the passage and entered the vaulted cave. On the far side of a white-robed figure that stirred slightly. Twining with a cry of surprise hurried across the cave and dropped on his knees beside the apparition.

One glance at the little huddled heap had told him that it was Alva, and as he knelt beside her he saw that she was unconscious.

With water from the spring he bathed her face and presently she stirred slightly and opened her eyes.

"You have come at last?" she said with a sigh. "Where are the others?"

"They did not come," he explained. "They were very tired after the afternoon's fishing. It was enough that I came."

"I thought that you never would come," she said with a sigh. "What time is it?"

"Only about 8:30."

"It seemed longer than that," she said with a laugh. "I tripped over a root and fell. My ankle was wrenched and as I was near the cave I came in here to bathe it. It hurt so that I thought that I would wait until the exploring party came. I never could have made the trip back to the hotel alone. Suppose that you had not come, either?"

"You wanted us to see if there was a cleft in the rock," he said simply. "The others would not come because they were too lazy," she cried, guessing at the truth. "I knew that I could depend on you, but I thought that the others would come, too."

"They are pretty well played out," began Twining apologetically, but she made a gesture of dissent.

"They were lazy, I know," she said simply. "Do you think that you can bandage my ankle?" I tore up part of my skirt for a bandage, but I guess I must have fainted before I could put it on."

With gentle hands, Twining cut away the shoe and stocking and applied bandages soaked in cold water. Then lifting the girl in his arms, he strode toward the entrance.

"I can make it, somehow," he said, determinedly. "I shall have to rest occasionally, but I'll make it."

Decker and Gifford were about to turn in as Twining strode into the clearing in front of the hotel. They hurried to relieve him of his burden, but he motioned them aside and carried Alva into the house.

"I found the gold," he told Mrs. Hitchman, as he laid his charge on the sofa in the parlor, and as she hurried off for arnica he leaned close to the golden head that rested wearily upon the pillow.

"Findings is keepings," he quoted, and there was no denial in the smile that answered the whispered words.

"I'm glad that it was you who found me," she whispered softly.



after dark. "That's right," assented Decker. "We'll walk over there after tea."

"I'll go over this afternoon and get the lay of the land," offered Twining. "I want to get on in the blacksmith's and order the rod anyway."

"I'll go with you," volunteered Alva. "I want to see what the place looks like, and it's not fair that you should go all alone."

"That's right," assented Gifford. "Not a bit of it," declared Alva with a light laugh. "You two lazy men must stay here and gain strength for the nocturnal expedition."

Twining smiled at their discomfiture and set off alone with Alva, after the night of a man for perhaps 50 feet, when it broadened into a vaulted cave of an acre and a half in extent.

A spring bubbled from the rock in one corner and ran through the center of the cave, emerging through a cleft in the rock on the far side.

"Let's go in and get a drink," suggested Twining. The water is as cold as though it had been led.

Alva smilingly assented, and Twining led the way into the cave.

"It doesn't seem to be haunted," she commented. "I think that is all nonsense."

"It's haunted only when the treasure is threatened," explained Twining, "though they do say that there are times when passers by have heard

fishing. Miss Eakins did not accompany them, pleading a headache and a desire to rest for the evening, and when they pulled their boat in to shore and hurried up to the hotel there was no sign of her, and in answer to their eager inquiries Miss Hitchman explained that she had started for town."

"Her mother went over to the lake camp this morning," continued Mrs. Hitchman. "She sent word by Ben that she was going to stay all night, and would Miss Alva please come over. There was no one to take her to the train, but she explained that Mr. Twining had shown her how to follow the short cut through the woods and she started off alone. She'll be back to-morrow, but she

A NEW HOME

RACE CHILVERS regarded with reprobation the big, bearded man who had swung himself from the train before it had fully stopped and came hurrying toward her.

"You promised to be here old-proachfully."

"But I looked for a time as though I should take more interest in an old-folks home," he said, with a laugh.

"Those coastwise steamers think nothing of getting in a couple of days before they are scheduled or 8 or 10 days behind. In my case they took the 10 days behind time. The crazy old engines broke down, as I wired you from New Orleans."

"You should have started earlier," she scolded, "but I'm not going to start right in to lecture. I know that it was all you could do to get here, anyhow, and it was dear of you to want to come back and see the old home when all your interests are so far away now."

"I'm sorry, though, that you came to-day. It's like the morning after the party. Everybody is tired and

cross, and it will be two or three days before things are right again. We



don't mind, of course, but it is not for you to come in for the first time in three years to find the place in confusion."

Everywhere there were signs of the celebration that was past. Along the street men were perched on the poles taking down the strings of incandescent bulbs that had festooned the line of march, and here and there a welcoming arch was already in process of destruction and was beginning to show the frame of lath and scantling that had been masked by bunting and staff during the celebration.

"All your people were here," explained Grace as they turned in the direction of the hotel. "They could only stay the first two days, but they enjoyed that, though they were sorry that they could not be here to welcome you."

"You seem to be looking after that end entirely to my satisfaction," declared Peyton Bradley. "Young is the first familiar face I have seen in three years. People from Beamsville never get down to Central America."

"Except yourself," corrected Grace. "You have been very successful, Peyton. At the opening meeting they spoke of you as one of the men who were a pride to the town."

"I'm glad of that," declared Peyton Bradley with a rumbling laugh. "I remember that in my younger days it was the general belief that that Peyton Bradley was bound to

get himself hung. I believe a lot of old ladies are still disappointed that I didn't."

"And lots of young ones who are glad that you didn't," amended Grace as they passed a bevy of high school girls who cast admiring glances at the stranger with the splendid physique and the strong, mobile face. Peyton Bradley was a good looking young giant and Grace was proud of him.

"They had been playfellows in the old school days and when the death of Bradley's father had broken up the family, and his heritage had been a silver watch and some good advice, he had fared forth to mend his fortune with such good result that after three years' absence he had felt able to return to visit his native town."

As they reached the hotel he paused for a moment to say goodbye to the girl.

"I'll be over as soon as I can wash up and change my things," he said. "It will not take more than half an hour, and then we can walk over to the point and get away from all this dirt and confusion."

Grace was waiting for him and when he had greeted Mrs. Chilvers they started for the little peninsula that was the favored walk of those who walked for pleasure.

"I'm glad to get out of the town," he declared when they had passed from the paved street to the country road. "I met about 50 people on the way to your house, and they all stopped me to tell how sorry I should be that I missed old-home week. I don't care."

"You don't care!" cried Grace, reprovingly. "Why, Peyton Bradley, I've got it in your own handwriting that you wanted to come on for home week."

"I admit that," he conceded, "but I didn't say old home. I just wrote that I wanted to come for home week and I'm not too late for that yet. I must be getting back a week from to-day, but I can have the celebration that I came for."

"I don't see what sort of a celebration you can have all by yourself," corrected Peyton. "But my celebration is not an old home, but a new home-week. I've come to tell you about my new home—and to ask you to share it."

"It's a pretty place, dear, and not as hot as you people up here seem to think it is. With that lucky turn over in the mine I was able to purchase a plantation and I've a home to offer at last. I wrote about home

week because your letters have always been the friendly sort that told



nothing of your heart. It was better so, because I did not want to be a dog-in-the-manger and tie you down to a man who perhaps might not win

success in years. "I came on for home week to ask you to share my home. If someone else had won you I could explain to our friends that I had just run on for the celebration and that they would not connect your name with mine. Is there someone else, Grace?"

They had paused at a bridge that spanned a narrow creek, and the girl with flaming cheeks was looking into the water. Now she turned a smiling face to his.

"I thought that there was someone else," she confessed, "but I thought that that 'someone' was my rival. When you did not write of anything but home week I told myself that you were interested in someone down there and that you wanted to have a look at the old place before you married and settled down. There never has been anyone but you, Peyton."

And there never was such a splendid celebration as our home week will be. But the real celebration, dear, will be when we truly come to our home. There will be no bunting arches—trumpety decorations built only to be torn down, and it will be the sweeter that only we two share it. That's the sort of home week I was thinking of."

"The sort that is best," softly whispered Grace.

ONE PLUS ONE

WHEN I am to understand that you are unwilling to give your consent to my marriage with Rose?" Archer as he rose.

"I have told you that I am determined that my daughter shall never marry one who is able to support her in the style to which she is accustomed. You have told me that you have an income slightly less than my daughter's dress allowance. I presume you are capable of making the simple arithmetical computation that two and two make four."

"I suppose I could," assented Archer. "The trouble is that there is another example on my mental

slate. That is that one taken from one leaves nothing."

"It's this way," explained Archer, taking his seat again. "If you take Rose from me you leave me nothing to hope for. Now do you get the idea?"

"More romantic nonsense," was the impatient reply. "You will soon find some young woman in your own station of life who will occupy your thoughts to the exclusion of my daughter."

"Station in life," echoed Archer with a laugh. "It seems to me that in the same station of life. You happened to make money and my father didn't, that's all. Rose is willing to get along on what I earn. We are not asking you to support us."

Her happiness should mean something to you."

"It does," agreed Sidney Wright. "It is for that reason that I insist that she shall not have to go through the inferno of economy that was necessary to my own younger days."

"I think that she'd rather have me than a red automobile and Paris frocks," said Archer, rising again. "Just think over that example, Mr. Wright. One minus one equals naught. You can't forget it."

Archer slipped out of the office and Wright turned once more to his desk.

He was doing what was best for his daughter. Rose would thank him some day, when she knew life better.

He picked up a paper, but he could not concentrate his attention

upon it because that absurd example kept ringing through his brain. It was later than usual when he left the office because the jingling would bring in his work.

He thought the ride home in the open air would drive it from his brain, but the horses seemed to tread out the sum with their hoof beats on the macadam. It was like the old "Punch, brothers, punch with care," that he recalled back in the '70s.

Rose's red eyes told that she had seen or heard from Archer, but she said nothing and Wright did not open the subject. More than ever the girl reminded him of her mother, and he remembered how happy they had been in those early days before the sudden growth of the city had

taken within the limits the Wright farm and rendered building lots as valuable as acres had been before.

They had been happy enough with each other, but the times were changing. Money was necessary to comfort and he would see that Rose married some one who could support her in the style to which she was accustomed.

It was the last thing in his thought that night and the first thing he recalled the next morning. In his sleep he had dreamed of gigantic figures, huge ones and monster ciphers, and he woke tired and worn.

He took a trolley to the office, but the flatted wheels ground out the same monotonous refrain, and when he went to lunch he called first upon his physician.

"Just a little tired feeling," explained the doctor when the trouble was explained, with no reference to the origin of the sum. "If I were you I'd run out of town for a few days and forget business worries for a while."

He pocketed the fee and escorted Wright to the door, watching him go down the street with a heavy tread that was very unlike Sidney Wright.

"Some business worry," he said to himself as he turned back to his own neglected lunch. "Wright needs to be careful or he will have a breakdown."

Wright halted the idea of a trip with pleasure. "It would take him out of sight of Rose's reproachful eyes, but at night in the sleeper the grinding of the wheels beat time to the incessant repetition of the one

minus one, nor was it any better next day at the winter resort.

Wright was thoroughly scared. Change of scene brought him no relief, and he was out of the question. For two days he grew worse and worse and at last his tried nerves broke under the strain. For months his worry over certain pending deals had weakened his nervous system. This was the last straw.

As a last resort he went over to the telegraph office in the lobby of the hotel and filled out a form. The clerk looked puzzled as he read the message, for it ran:

"Change your formula to read one plus one makes one. You have my consent."

Then Sidney Wright went upstairs to get the first night's rest he had enjoyed since Archer had left his office.